At Boston College, we hope to draw on the Jesuit tradition of finding conversation partners to discuss issues and problems facing society. Who is your favorite conversation partner? What do you discuss with that person? (400 words)

Charmant is French for charming. Although this definition is much questionable, there are episodes when my twelve-year-old brother truly shines as charming.

Charmant and I grew up being Potterheads. Quidditch tournaments taught us the harsh truth of success based on the highest scores accomplished in a match. Where there is competition, there is only one winner; anything along the lines is disregarded and forgotten. Consequently, this mindset brought me to believe that I must be a winner above all else; to overlap and dominate in order to succeed.

To compete towards victory drives the integrity to grow as an individual and as a team. As captain of the girls soccer club, this is the value I set. Our loss in one of the most important tournaments of the year meant defeat. In times like these, Charmant would approach me and listen to my complaints, my should have(s) and could have(s), as he shook his head or nodded along as a response.

“You may not have won today, but it really was a good game. You threw amazing kicks after all that practice and made new friends. To me, you’re all winners.” I gave him the stop-being-cliche look, reaffirming that I was defeated.

What surprised me was that Charmant noted all the best moments I missed: swapping Instagram accounts and conversing with new people is something meaningful to me, a social butterfly. I am reminded to celebrate personal milestones after long practicing and finally improving on the field. The hours of training spent with my teammates made our journey together all the more special. Our maximum effort into preparation and determination while competing defined “winning” to Charmant.

This newfound realization brought me to contemplate: If winning meant improving as a team player and as an individual, then why does the very belief I advocate alongside my teammates seem to be inadequate? As humans, we always yearn for more. We are never satisfied and ignore progress because we are blinded by what we lack instead of have.

The definition of “success” has long been distorted, valuing the final result rather than the fruitful experience. Charmant inspired me to be a better listener, discovering that meaningful discussions stem from exchanging thoughts without invalidating opinions. I’ve learned to take a step back and redefine success in my pursuit of learning, reminding myself to express gratitude in the future of winning and pre-winning.